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ABSTRACT

General objectives for the PEG Program at Burlington County College, New Jersey, were to develop a model curriculum for paraprofessionals in noncategorical special education and to present and disseminate the curriculum and materials. Designed to be offered by a community college, the program was to consist of four courses--two concentrating on the legal basis for the delivery of special education services and on familiarity with terminology and two assisting the student in self-study and skill development while on the job. From the format established in the earlier FY '78 project (see Note), the third and fourth courses were developed to complete the PEG Program curriculum. Preliminary field testing of the first and second courses prepared during the FY '78 project was carried out through three field test conferences. Additional field testing of the entire curriculum package was carried out through the teaching process. (A lengthy appendix contains the field report. It reports the expert field testing at a series of interaction conferences, including one at which participants completed a checklist of paraprofessional competencies and another conference at which participants evaluated the training PEG offered toward each competency. The forms are provided. A second appendix is a program informational brochure.) (VLB)

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FINAL REPORT
OF
PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN
SPECIAL EDUCATION

1978-79

Social Science Division
Burlington County College
Pemberton - Browns Mills Road
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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Project Duration:

July 1, 1978

Beginning Date

June 30, 1979

Ending Date

The Contractors undertaking this project were encouraged to express fully their judgments in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official funding agency positions or policies.

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I. Introduction

A. The Problem

Vocational education in the area of special education is rapidly approaching a crisis. Paraprofessionals trained to serve handicapped citizens are in increasingly short supply and even now an adequately tested curriculum for their training is not yet available. As evidence of the extent of the problem the 1977 statement (p. 16, 17) of the New Jersey Higher Education Council for Special Education, an organization of deans and department heads in special education in the state university and colleges, may be cited in its entirety:

General Problem Description

Presently 860 instructional aides function in New Jersey's 3,484 special classes and resource rooms. It is estimated that less than 25% of these people hold any formal degree and little, if any, preparation specifically dealing with persons with handicaps. The New Jersey Higher Education Council is currently considering certification recommendations for special education paraprofessionals. Certification acceptance would create a tremendous demand for preparation from the current preparation programs.

Additionally, increases in special education pre-school programs, day care centers, residential institutions and newly proposed state facilities for the deaf, deaf-blind, severely emotionally disturbed and multiply-handicapped can be expected to open positions for an estimated 300-500 aides in the next three to five years.

One of the current suggestions for dealing with handicapped children in mainstream settings is to supplement the regular class teachers with an aide prepared to work with handicapped. The implications of this suggestion if only partially realized would strongly affect program demand.

Currently, there are no teacher preparation programs that include instruction and/or experience in the use of a paraprofessional in a class setting. The need for the ability to clarify work roles, understand division of labor, and sense shifts in classroom dynamics arises when an aide is introduced into the class setting. Acquiring these skills demands a specific and integral part of today's teacher preparation programs.

Statement of the Problem

1. It is currently projected that within the next five years there will be insufficient numbers of paraprofessional personnel prepared to work with the handicapped.
2. If certification is mandated for instructional special education paraprofessionals, there will be insufficient number of preparation programs available to satisfy this requirement.
3. Current preparation programs do not include specific instruction and/or experience in the use of instructional aides.

The problem is particularly acute in Burlington County. Within Burlington County more than 100 of the 860 New Jersey special education teacher aides are already functioning. The number exceeds every other county in the state and is from five to fifteen times as many in adjacent counties. Although the population of the county is not as large as other counties in the state, the population of handicapped is proportionately far greater because of the location of state institutions within the county.

To cite but a few examples of current (FY'79) and projected needs: New Lisbon State School nearby Burlington County College is currently (before July 1) staffing nearly 300 direct care positions in the only complete ICEMR (Intermediate Care Facility for Mental Retardation) in the state. Within the next four years, additional trained personnel will be needed to staff direct care positions in the numerous projected community and group homes developed by the Division of Mental Retardation in Burlington County.

The opening of John Ossi Vocational School in Medford, along with the planned expansion of the Burlington Special Services School District program to a new campus on Woodlane Road in Burlington County to support increased enrollment suggests still more market for competent paraprofessionals. Moreover, increasing client loads of day care centers and adult activity centers warrants increased numbers of direct care staff.

Finally, with the impact of P. L. 94-142 beginning to be felt, especially in the implementation of individualized education programs (IEP's) in every classroom, there is every reason to believe that "caps" or not, improved service delivery systems will see an expansion of instructional aides, or paraprofessionals.

The vocational education aspect of paraprofessionals in special education is quite specific. Paraprofessionals are trained to a level of competence that provides clients superior service and the paraprofessional appropriate job satisfaction. Paraprofessionals make a life-time vocation of their position as aides to teachers; they are not simply teachers adjusting to an economic situation. Many of them already hold positions for which further training is vital (for example, Burlington County College is currently engaged in providing courses in an in-service program for training personnel at New Lisbon State School). When the first offering of an introduction to special education was scheduled at Burlington County College in the winter of 1977-78, more than two-thirds of the class were in positions as instructional aides in special education classrooms and had previously had no special education studies. There was serious interest in a program of paraprofessional training in special education.

The thoroughness of special education programs depends in large measure upon their constant individualized application. In that application the paraprofessional is an essential element. Hence, if trained paraprofessionals are not available no program in special education, however accurately conceived, can be as thorough as it might be.

The efficiency of a special education program likewise depends upon the economics provided by trained paraprofessionals. The value of the paraprofessional in the school economy is considerable. With their use for academic

instructional purposes class sizes are allowed to be increased by one-third (1/3), typically from fifteen to twenty. (New Jersey Administrative Code, 6:28-3:19). They may also be used for supplemental instruction when approved by local boards (N. J. Code 6:28-3:19(c)). Moreover, their contribution to activities directly involving handicapped but not restricted to instruction, is unlimited. Appropriately, too, they may be prepared by their professionalism to serve as a designee of a school's chief administrator for record keeping. (N. J. Code 6:3-2, 4)

The thoroughness and efficiency of paraprofessionals' services in institutional, preschool, and school settings, depend upon their being adequately trained. That training is based, in a large measure, upon a curriculum that can be developed and evaluated according to a standard of excellence.

B. Objectives

The general objectives for the PEG Program at Burlington County College were:

1. To develop a model curriculum for paraprofessionals in noncategorical special education. Subordinate to this objective are three objectives indicated in the program design, i.e. sub-objectives:
 - a. to establish parameters of a curriculum for paraprofessionals with special emphasis on personal and professional growth in work experience;
 - b. to develop and field-test materials supportive of a., but not developed in the previous phase of the project;
 - c. to finalize and formulate materials so that they are ready for classroom use and dissemination.
2. To present and disseminate curriculum and its materials to professionals in vocational education, special education, and general education so that other colleges, certifying agencies, and local

school districts may know what to expect of a trained paraprofessional in special education.

C. Related Research

The most comprehensive general statement concerning paraprofessionals in Special Education is found in The Utilization and Training of Paraprofessionals in Special Education, Present Status and Future Prospects with an up-date in 1975. Several studies have been done to validate either the use of paraprofessionals in special education or to evaluate individual programs.

Reporting in Paraprofessional Movement in Special Education: Historical Perspective, Mary Beth Fafard, New Careers Training Laboratory:

"Several factors have influenced examining paraprofessionals: (a) the changing role of the certified teacher in special education, (b) the wide use of paraprofessionals, and (d) the increasing amount of training paraprofessionals are receiving through community colleges and inservice programs."

The success of the program instituted by Haring and Cruickshank as early as 1957, caused them to speculate that the use of paraprofessionals may be the only basis upon which to achieve successful integration of handicapped children into regular classrooms--today's mainstreaming!

The more recent role specifications for paraprofessionals has been based on a competency framework. (Tucker and Horner, 1977) The emphasis has been on identifying skills that are necessary to work effectively with handicapped children regardless of professional status.

For the most effective delivery of educational services, Tucker and colleagues indicated that both the paraprofessional and the professional must possess skills that are directly related to changing behavior of handicapped children (e.g. following a specific programmed teaching sequence). Fafard concludes "thus the prime focus of paraprofessional utilization is in providing direct instructional services."

In general, training programs provided by community colleges combined theoretical course work and practical experience. The associate degree or certificate program in community colleges usually provide training in (a) core courses in child development, handicapping conditions, interpersonal communication; (b) technique training; (c) on-the-job training.

The trend is toward competency-based specifications of skills. In a study of the research, it is revealed that paraprofessionals working with handicapped children have a direct/positive effect on children's academic performance. Fafard concluded: "the support for trained paraprofessionals delivery of instruction directly to handicapped children is overwhelming."

II. Report

A. Procedures Used

The procedures used for this project were similar to those utilized in the FY'78 project. From the format established in the earlier project, the 3rd and 4th courses were developed to complete the PEG Program curriculum.

The same curriculum development specialist was acquired via consultant contract as used in the FY'78 project. She was an adjunct faculty member with credentials in Special Education. She developed a schedule for manuscript preparation and completed the manuscript for each curriculum volume. Each manuscript was then submitted to the typist where camera ready copy was prepared and sent to the proofreader for final editing before going to print. The schedule was maintained and all curriculum materials for the third and fourth courses in the PEG Program are prepared.

The second curriculum development specialist utilized in the first project (FY'78) was retained as the Field Test Co-ordinator. Preliminary Field Testing of the products prepared during the FY'78 project (materials for the first and second courses of the PEG Program) was carried out during November and December of 1978 and January of 1979 through three Field Test conferences. A complete report of the field testing can be found in Appendix 1.

Additional field testing of the entire curriculum package (The PEG Program) was carried out through the teaching process. Each course was taught during the Winter and Spring/Summer semesters. Data was collected as to the adequacy of the courses as prepared.

The PEG Program is currently listed as a part of the program offerings of the Social Science Division, with courses being scheduled for the upcoming academic year.

B. Findings and Interpretations

Through the field testing of the PEG Program, it was found that:

1. There is an interest and a need for the instructing of professionals and para-professionals in the area of Special Education.
2. Additional revisions are needed to the materials, mainly due to the changes made in the legislation addressing itself to special needs individuals.

These findings bore out the initial assumptions made for undertaking this project. It was learned that professionals as well as paraprofessionals have a need for additional training in Special Education, primarily as a result of the "Mainstreaming" concept.

Due to the found need for revisions to the original manuscript, the completion of this added support to the manuscripts will be made in subsequent months. It is believed the products will increase in their value to future students and instructors through this addition to the project.

C. Dissemination

Originally it was planned to carry out a special dissemination conference, specifically for those in Community College Education Departments with specific interest and responsibility for training in Special Education. It was decided that such a conference would be of greatest value to the participants if all curriculum materials were completed in print form and on hand at the conference. It was therefore decided to hold such a conference during May of 1979.

It was found that this was a poor choice of time and due to the end of term and various other college activities, few instructors and administrators could avail themselves of such a conference. It was therefore agreed that at a later date--possibly during the fall of 1979--such a conference would be rescheduled for dissemination purposes to other community colleges in New Jersey.

Dissemination was a part of the field test conferences and feed-back was received about the products. This will be utilized in the revision process.

The curriculum development specialist also attended a national conference where a presentation was made on the PEG Program. Numerous inquiries were made about the Program and the specific curriculum products. It is envisioned that future opportunities such as this for product and program dissemination will be sought and have an impact upon the usefulness of the curriculum.

D. Sex Bias and Sex Role Stereotyping

Efforts to eliminate sex bias and sex stereotyping are manifold. They reassert the male as well as the female role in the care and education of children with special needs, even or especially at the early stages of development of a child. Burlington County College efforts include:

1. Active recruitment of males as paraprofessionals in special education.
2. Elimination for curricular materials of exclusively maternal care approach to early education, especially for those with special needs.
3. Inclusion of the father and mother image at work and at home in a proper proportion of educational materials.

III. Summary

A. Conclusions

From the implementation of the projects in Paraprofessional Training in Special Education in FY'78 and FY'79, the following conclusions are reached:

1. That there is a definite need for specific curriculum materials that can be used interchangeably to train professionals and paraprofessionals who will be working with special needs students, and that these materials can be utilized in formalized course programing or in-service training sessions.
2. The particular design of the PEG Program, which employs both formalized presentation course material based on principles of working with special needs individuals, and coursework that combines the best current practice of instructing special needs individuals with on site practicum, is a valid and valuable approach to training paraprofessionals.

B. Recommendations

As a result of the curriculum development and its initial utilization, it is recommended that the following be undertaken:

1. Basic revisions to the materials, particularly to update the information based on legislation as it effects working with special needs individuals. This legislation had not been finalized when the original volumes were produced. This finalization resulted in numerous changes that directly effect these volumes produced in FY'78.
2. Due to the established value and interest in the curriculum, evidenced at the national conference and the field test conferences, further dissemination is needed in the upcoming years to insure the greatest utilization and awareness of the materials available.

IV. Supplementary Section

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APPENDIX 1

FIELD TEST REPORT

The curriculum area to which this project addressed itself was the training of paraprofessionals in special education. That area falls within the scope of two general programs already in operation at Burlington County College, namely, the training of paraprofessionals in Early Childhood (Pre-school) Education and the Teacher Assistant Program for paraprofessionals in the school systems of Burlington County. At the outset it was noted that the paraprofessional component in special education is allied to both the existing programs.

Faculty Acceptance of Peg Program

Under the leadership of the chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences, the faculty undertook a study of the Peg program, its philosophy, curriculum, methodology, and practicability both as an associate degree option and as an elective course sequence. After considerable study and dialogue, and reckoning the significance of the Peg program as a certifiable study sequence, it was decided that the paraprofessional program in special education would be identified as an A.A.S. program sequence (non-transferrable). This conclusion did not preclude, however, the development of a certificate program at some subsequent time. Summarily, the faculty acted responsibly to embrace the program as a viable program option at the A.A.S. level and possibly for certification at some future date, while recognizing its practical career implications.

Expert field testing

A series of interaction conferences were scheduled for November, December, and January, 1979, wherein experts in the training and utilization of paraprofessionals were invited to interact with local (county) and college educators whose decisions regarding the training and use of paraprofessionals are critical.

The design of these breakfast conferences allowed each major component of the Peg program to be examined: the content areas in Peg I and II, including the law and the handicapped; the personal/professional development of the special education paraprofessional; the integration of and utilization of the paraprofessional in both regular and specialized curriculms and schools/institutions, the overall design and plan of the Peg program

At each meeting the Peg program and its products were examined and a dialogue developed as regards their feasibility and practicality as an education/training program. Participants in the breakfast conferences--project personnel, educators from local townships, regional special services districts, state institutions, vocational-technical schools, non-profit agencies, etc., as well as college personnel--used the visiting experts as resources to their own needs in the training, utilization, and development of qualified special education paraprofessionals. In the course of the discussions the Peg program and products were widely reviewed.

A checklist of paraprofessional competencies was distributed to the participants at the Nov. 29 conference and the participants were

asked to mark those they deemed most appropriate in paraprofessional training. (See forms following.) (The competency list was derived from an informal survey of more than 25 paraprofessional training programs currently in operation.) The summative ratings are presented later in this report. Considerable discussion was generated at this meeting concerning the competencies expected of paraprofessionals in special education.

Guest expert on November 29 was Anna Lou Pickett, Project Director, New Careers Training Laboratory, Center for Advanced Study in Education, City University of New York, speaking of "Validated Programs in Training Paraprofessionals in Special Education."

December 13, Wednesday, Joe Ziev, Director, Curriculum for Human Resources School, Human Resources Center (Viscardi), Albertson, New York (Long Island) addressed the breakfast conference on the "Use of Paraprofessionals with the Special Needs Student in Public and Vocational Education."

On Wednesday, January 10, Gregory Silberberg, National Center for Law and the Handicapped, South Bend, Indiana, spoke on "The Teacher, the Paraprofessional, the Parent--Advocates."

In the last conference period and fieldtest worksession, January 10, each participant was asked to consider the Peg program and its materials--curriculum design, trainer manuals, skilltexts, studytexts, skillbank and studybank--and to assign an evaluative word for the competence listed, thereby indicating how appropriately the program and its materials appear to train toward that competency.

PEG PROGRAM
FIELDTEST WORKSESSION

Burlington County College
Pemberton, New Jersey

November 29, 1978

A CHECKLIST OF PARAPROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Note:

1. Mark these competencies in the column you feel is most appropriate.
2. Add any other competencies at the end of the list and rate them as well.
3. For those competencies that you have marked essential, assign a numerical order at the left of each such item.

Paraprofessional Competencies Essential Desirable Nonessential Undesirable

Orientation to Total Program:

Description of job opportunities and career advancement				
Knowledge of educational program and facilities				
Educational objectives				
School regulations				
School practices/policies				
Administrative structure				
Communication channels				

Ethics and Standards:

Personal responsibilities Confidentiality and Privacy				
Knowledge of P.L. 94-142				
Knowledge of N.J.A.C. Chapter 26				
Knowledge of Sec. 503 and 504, Rehab. Act.				
Responsibilities as a paraprofessional				

*As most frequently listed in an informal survey of more than 25 paraprofessional training programs in current operation.

Paraprofessional Competencies Essential Desirable Nonessential Undesirable

Selected Skill Areas:

Clerical				
Behavior management technique				
Observing and recording				
Evidence of resourcefulness in school and community				
Technical skills				
First aid procedures				
Assist pupils in academics				
Supervision of children				
The Exceptional Citizen in the Special and Regular Classroom and Elsewhere:				
Characteristics of various types of exceptional individuals				
Normal developmental patterns				
Representative methods in teaching/training				
Leading thinkers in the field				
Popularly used tests				
Terminology				
Advocate groups				
Employment predictabilities				
Representative agencies				

Paraprofessional Competencies Essential Desirable Nonessential Undesirable

Interpersonal Relationships:

Motivational experiences				
Communication skills				
Social and personal skills				
Understanding of limits of authority				
School community values and dynamics				
Decision making and problem solving				
Leadership, initiative, team roles				

Learning Atmosphere:

Awareness of teacher's and pupil's needs				
Awareness of the effect of positive mental health on the performance of others				
Importance of structure				
Use of self as intervener				
Evidence of understanding, warmth, and empathy				

Please check appropriately:

A. Member of:

- a. _____ college instructional staff
- b. _____ administrative staff - college
- c. _____ administrative staff - institution
- d. _____ administrator - special services
- e. _____ other:

D. Personnel relationships with paraprofessionals:

- _____ hiring
- _____ training
- _____ supervising

3. Professional interest is primarily in:

- a. _____ nursery/kindergarten
- b. _____ primary grades (1-3)
- c. _____ middle grades (4-6)
- d. _____ elementary (1-6)
- e. _____ junior high school
- f. _____ senior high school
- g. _____ total secondary (9-12)
- h. _____ system wide (K-12)

E. Experience working with special education paraprofessionals:

- _____ none
- _____ very little
- _____ some
- _____ quite a bit
- _____ a great deal

4. Number of years in education:

- _____ 1-3
- _____ 4-6
- _____ 7-9
- _____ 10-12
- _____ more than 12

PEG PROGRAM

FIELDTEST WORKSESSION

Burlington County College
Pemberton, New Jersey

Social Sciences Division
January 10, 1979

At the first worksession, November 29, 1978, each participant was asked to complete a Checklist of Paraprofessional Competencies by ranking each competency item as "essential, desirable, nonessential, or undesirable." It was explained that the checklist would be used as an informal evaluation tool in the discussion of the PEG program as a useful program in the training of paraprofessionals in special education and in related service to exceptional citizens.

The lists that follow are made up of those competencies which were deemed "essential" or "desirable" by those in attendance at the first meeting and those who completed the checklist by mail or at a later date. Two-thirds tally was necessary to retain the item on this list.

Now, having had a brief introduction to the program (and, incidentally, to the products, which will be evaluated during the first use of them in BCC classes this semester) will you again read the items which follow and in the space provided, rank the PEG program, either as a whole or in its components? If, in your judgment, the program appears to train toward the competency listed, assign the appropriate word. If it does not appear to train toward the competency, rank it as inadequate or missing. Please use the room provided to add your own comments. Thank you.

<u>Paraprofessional competencies</u>	<u>PEG program</u>			
	excellent	adequate	inadequate	missing
<u>1. Orientation to total program:</u>				
Knowledge of educational program and facilities				
Educational objectives				
School regulations				
School practices/policies				
Communication channels				
<u>2. Ethics and standards:</u>				
Personal responsibilities to confidentiality and privacy				
Knowledge of P.L. 94-142				
Knowledge of NJAC, Ch. 26				
Responsibilities as a paraprofessional				

Paraprofessional competencies

PEG program

excellent

adequate

inadequate

missing

3. Selected skill areas:

Clerical

Behavior management techniques

Resourcefulness in school and community

Technical skills

First aid

assistance in academics

Supervision of children

4. The exceptional citizen in the classroom, institution, agency, etc.

Characteristics of various types of exceptional individual

Normal developmental patterns

Advocate groups

employment predictabilities

Representative agencies

5. Interpersonal relationships

Communication skills

Social and personal skills

Understanding of limits of authority

Decision-making and problem solving

6. Learning Atmosphere:

Awareness of teacher's and pupil's (or client's) needs

Awareness of the effectiveness of positive mental health on the performance of others

Paraprofessional competencies

PEG program

	excellent	adequate	inadequate	missing
Importance of structure				
Evidence of understanding, warmth, and empathy				

Please use this space for additional comment.

Please check appropriately:

A. Member of

- a. ☐ college instructional staff
- b. ☐ administrative staff (college)
- c. ☐ administrative staff (institution)
- d. ☐ administrative staff (special services)
- e. ☐ other

B. Professional interest (primarily)

- a. ☐ early childhood
- b. ☐ elementary school
- c. ☐ middle (junior) school
- d. ☐ secondary school
- e. ☐ total system
- f. ☐ adult client
- g. ☐ total client
- h. ☐ regional (district)

D. Personnel relationships with paraprofessionals:

- a. ☐ hiring
- b. ☐ training
- c. ☐ supervising

E. Personnel relationships with regular or special education teachers:

- a. ☐ hiring
- b. ☐ training
- c. ☐ supervising

F. Experience working with special education paraprofessionals:

- a. ☐ none
- b. ☐ very little
- c. ☐ some
- d. ☐ quite a bit

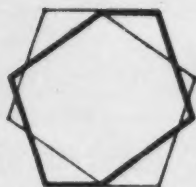
The responders were fewer in number than those who responded in November as to the essential nature, or less, of the competency itself. However, the majority of those responding found the Peg program excellent in its preparation of competencies in these areas: educational objectives, treatment of P. L. 94-142, New Jersey Administrative Code, communication skills, social and personal skills, awareness of teacher and pupil's (client's) needs, awareness of positive mental health on others, importance of structure, and evidence of understanding, warmth, and empathy.

All responders found the program adequate in its training for competencies in recognizing and understanding the exceptional citizen in the classroom, institution, agency, as regards characteristics, normal developmental patterns, advocacy, agency activities, etc. Some selected skills appeared to be inadequately allowed for in the total program such as clerical and first aid.

National Conference on the Training and Utilization of
Paraprofessionals in Education Programs for the Handicapped

The Peg program curriculum developers were invited to present the program and its materials to the first national conference on paraprofessional training in special education, April 4, 5, and 6, 1979, in Austin, Texas, through a grant made to New Careers Training Laboratory, Center for Advanced Study in Education, City University of New York, by Bureau of Education of the Handicapped, U.S.O.E.

Enthusiastic reception was given the materials by a large number of the more than 200 participants who represented institutions of



The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Center for Advanced Study in Education: New Careers Training Laboratory
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This is the first announcement of a NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE TRAINING AND UTILIZATION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE HANDICAPPED. The Conference will be held at the Sheraton-Crest Inn in Austin, Texas on April 4, 5, and 6, 1979.

This Conference is one of the activities the New Careers Training Laboratory is conducting on a national basis through a grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, U.S.O.E.

Purpose of the Conference: The passage and implementation of PL 94-142 and mandatory legislation passed by the various states have contributed to demands for increased services for the education of handicapped children in public school programs. One response to these demands has been the increased utilization of paraprofessionals in programs for the handicapped. While there are various reasons for the increasing numbers of paraprofessionals serving in these programs, the basic reason must be to insure the quality of service provided for all handicapped children.

The Conference agenda is designed for the following groups and agencies - Institutions of Higher Education, State Education Agencies, Local Education Agencies (including administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and local school board members), other agencies serving the handicapped, and professional organizations.

The major themes of the Conference will be:

- New and Developing Roles of Paraprofessionals in Special Education Programs
- Inservice and pre-service training programs for Paraprofessionals, their certification and credentialing
- Administrative and Legal Concerns
- Development of an Ongoing Network to Share Information on These and Other Issues Affecting the Training and Utilization of Paraprofessionals in Special Education.

Some of the persons who have agreed to serve as presentors and resource leaders are: Phyllis Kelly, Kansas State Department of Special Education; Freda Judge, Alabama State Department of Special Education; Vera Yager, Tucson Unified School District; Barbara Reid, DeAnza College, California; Richard White, Project ASSIST, Indiana University; Grace Hodgson, Santa Fe Community College, Florida; Edward Moore, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped; Jeanne Crowder, University of Kansas.

A copy of the final agenda will be mailed to you after January 1, 1979. In the meantime, to aid us in our planning, we would appreciate it if you would return the attached form if you are interested in attending the Conference. Please feel free to share this information with anyone else you think would be interested in the Conference.

higher education, State Educational Agencies, Local Educational Agencies, and professional organizations serving the handicapped.

User field testing

Scheduling of the Peg program was set for January, 1979, followed by the spring semester, terminating in June, at Burlington County College. Although the project funds did not subsidize tuitions, the College offered the Peg program and approximately thirty students were enrolled in the four-course sequence in one or more courses. Twenty-six completed one or more of the components of Peg; one student completed the sequence of four. All except three students were actually employed in paraprofessional positions, some in institutions, regular classrooms, and special services district self-contained classrooms.

The college coordinator developed liaison with directors of special education, special services personnel, child study teams, etc. Observation visits were scheduled weekly and feedback conferences for coaching and counselling were completed. Students periodically reported orally and in writing, following the format of checkpoints and "help wanted" segments of the skilltexts and studytexts. These served as a testing component in the texts. The Skillbank and Studybank were utilized in cooperation with the Learning Resources Center and library facilities of Burlington County College. The portable professional library gave support to the Peg students who undertook intensive reading programs highly individualized to student needs. The culminating event in the user field test activity schedule was a

user conference June 25 when selected Peg students presented oral, cassette recorded, written feedback regarding the program, its materials, and learning experiences, in an intensive and penetrating dialogue with the curriculum developers.

The field test results will be incorporated into revisions of the Peg program to be completed by December 31, 1979.

The final dissemination conference for Peg program was unavoidably postponed. There is a possibility of its being scheduled for fall 1979. Meanwhile, the Peg products are being disseminated through the office of William Wenzel, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Vocational Education, Trenton, N. J. (see Appendix II attached).

APPENDIX 2

THE PEG PROGRAM

Burlington County College
Pemberton, New Jersey 08068

"Peg your practice to principles."

What it is:

Peg is a four-course sequence designed to train special education paraprofessionals. It includes a study of the principles and practices found in contemporary special education, plus an individualized guided program of personal and professional growth in recommended competences.

A grant from the Division of Vocational Education of the New Jersey Department of Education has supported the development of the program design and the preparation of a set of innovative materials* tailored to Peg's objectives.

Who it is for:

Paraprofessionals or classroom aides employed in public or private schools, in regular or special classrooms, and in vocational education.

Paraprofessionals or technicians employed by public or private institutions and/or agencies for persons with special needs.

Preservice trainees in early childhood education programs.
Parents and family of children with special needs.

When and where it is offered:

At this time (April, 1979) the Peg Program is in field-test operation at Burlington County College, Pemberton, New Jersey. It is planned that it will become a viable option in the associate degree program offered at Burlington County College.

How it works:

Peg I and Peg II offer studies in a fairly traditional mode in the legal basis for the delivery of special educational and related services (reflecting both federal and New Jersey legislation), familiarity with terminology, and studies in the several exceptionalities which are commonly recognized within special education. Materials support include the Overview: Foundations, with glossed texts of pertinent legislation; Terminology, a handbook specially designed for the paraprofessional; innovative Studytexts in each exceptionality; and a Studybank, individualized access to further information.

ForYou and Echo are nontraditional courses designed to assist the student in self-study and to help him or her achieve personal and professional growth, particularly in those areas indicated by the self-administered Needs Assessment "ForMe." ForMe is also used to cooperatively write the student's IEP. Then, a trio--student, field facilitator, and college coordinator--cooperate to extend the student's growth to its outer parameters within the context of his or her position, whether current or planned.

ForYou emphasizes skill growth in individualized areas according to the IEP, using individual and small group study and conferences, on site observation and feedback. Echo verifies student progress

using videotape and individual conference. Materials support for ForYou and Echo include Skilltexts, some specially developed and some selected from commercial publications; the ForYou Facilitator Manual and Student Manual; and a Skillbank, individualized access to multimedia skill development materials.

*Special features of
the Peg program:*

- ...opportunity for the student to build and implement his/her own IEP
- ...opportunity to develop and extend appropriate and effective skills on the job
- ...opportunity to study the state/federal legislation expressing the rights of the handicapped
- ...opportunity for coaching/counseling on site
- ...opportunity for active response feedback from professionals
- ...a multimedia support program
- ...a portable professional library in addition to Studytexts, Studybank, Skilltexts, Skillbank

For further information: William Wenzel, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Vocational Education
Department of Education
State of New Jersey
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

**Program design and materials preparation:* Mary Jane Ward, Ph.D. and Mary Wolfe, M.A.
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